

Two Rivers High School 955 West 12th Street Ogden, Utah 84404

March 29, 2007





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Two Rivers High School

955 West 12th Street Ogden, Utah 84404

March 29, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ii
Utah State Board of Education	iii
Weber School District Board of Education and District Administration	1
Two Rivers High School Administration and Staff	2
Two Rivers High School Mission Statement and Belief Statements	3
Members of the Visiting Team	4
Visiting Team Report	5
Chapter 1: School Profile	5
Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry	6
Chapter 2: The Self-Study Process	6
Chapter 3: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness	6
Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals	7
Curriculum Development	7
Quality Instructional Design	8
Quality Assessment Systems	9
Leadership for School Improvement.	10
Community Building	11
Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning	12
Chapter 4: Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) Standards	13
Chapter 5: School Improvement Efforts – Action Plan	14
Chapter 6: Major Commendations and Recommendations of the Visiting Team	15

FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 29, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Two Rivers High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Elaine Jensen is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Two Rivers High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Two Rivers High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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TWO RIVERS HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Elaine Jensen Principal

Counseling

Brad Johnson Counselor

Support Staff

Susan Himelright Registrar/Secretary
Nancy West Head Secretary
Robert Sam Head Custodian
Linda Foy Media Center Specialist
Sharen Kamp CTE Coordinator
Kathy Gillihan CTE Aide

Faculty

Full-Time Part-Time Cassie Cox **Nealy Adams** Tina Hansen **Grant Harkness** Rich Lambert Bryan Hatch Jane Hjorth Pam Lee Morrell McKinnon Marykay Moore Karen Miller Steve Morris Sinhue Noriega Nathan Toll Annette Pham Jonathon Ward Linda Roybal Suzanne Thompson

TWO RIVERS HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Two Rivers High School in partnership with students, families, educators, and the community is to promote academic excellence and to create a safe, caring atmosphere in which students aspire to become responsible, functional citizens and life-long learners.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

All students have the right and ability to learn.

Educators utilize appropriate curriculum, strategies, and modeling to teach integrity, ethics, tolerance, and social responsibility.

School provides a safe learning environment which promotes student accountability and fosters academic achievement.

School promotes life-long learning and productive citizenship.

Educating a child is a community effort; we combine resources to create academic excellence.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ted P. Lovato, Consultant, Utah State Office of Education, Visiting Team Chairperson

Steve Chadaz, Dale Young Community High School, Box Elder School District

Joe Kelly, Landmark High School, Nebo School District

Ross Poore, Cottonwood Youth Academy, Private School

VISITING TEAM REPORT

TWO RIVERS HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Two Rivers High School is the alternative education high school for Weber School District. Students are referred to Two Rivers from the four comprehensive public high schools in the district. The school is coed and currently serves 543 students in grades 10-12.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

It was obvious to the members of the Visiting Team that the staff of Two Rivers High School has an interest in advancing student achievement. The school has excellent teachers who have produced outstanding practices in their respective areas. The Visiting Team was very impressed with the overall feel of the school and the team atmosphere observed there.

The Visiting Team observed nearly every teacher on staff and found excellent practices in the classroom. The use of teams to apply knowledge in specific case studies was observed, as well as the individual help given to students. The Visiting Team talked and interacted with several students, parents, and support staff members who were very positive about the school and its programs.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team was very impressed with the highly professional school profile and appreciated the depth of the self-study.

The Visiting Team was impressed with the structure and success of the "advisory hour." The philosophy behind the advisory hour is to enable teachers and students to bond creating a respectful, caring atmosphere. Appreciation for the advisory hour was expressed by all key stakeholders.

The Visiting Team recommends, after visiting with students, that an advisory council be created to include students in the decision-making process, where applicable. This will empower the administration and give students a greater stake in the school's policies and procedures affecting them. This council not need be a formal student government structure.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Build on previous successes and continue to improve the school's programs (specifically, alternative methods of instruction).
- Develop a guidance and advisory program to include all teachers as advisors, with parents and students participating in decision-making.
- Continue to raise the expectations of all stakeholders, and continue efforts to secure more personnel where needed.
- Integrate academic and career-technical content in all subject areas.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?
 - The school has made every effort to engage the entire school community in the self-study process. The process included parents, staff and faculty members, students, and district staff members. The Visiting Team found that all community members were not aware of the process, but those few who were involved found the process to be useful and productive.
- b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?
 - The self-study accurately reflects the school's current strengths and limitations. The school's self-study speaks directly to strengths and areas identified for improvement. The school's DRSLs and action plans are well defined.

The addendum to the self-study reviews other important issues, such as the Young Parents Program and Student Tracker information.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Two Rivers High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate academic skills which support life-long learning.

- 2. Students practice workplace skills by improving attendance, punctuality, and task completion.
- 3. Students will take responsibility for their own education by tracking their personal progress.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The mission statement defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school; specifically, the mission statement incorporates Tolerance, Respect, High Expectation and Social Responsibility—TRHS.

The involvement of the stakeholder groups in the vision, mission, and goals of the school was apparent to the Visiting Team. Signs throughout the building are seen by all.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The belief statements reflect direction and responsibilities for educators, students, the learning environment, and the community at large. For example, "Educators will model integrity . . .students have the right and ability to learn. . . school provides a safe learning environment. . . and educating a child is a community effort."

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The school's mission and beliefs align and support the desired results for student learning in all categories. The mission and beliefs of the school and community are consistent with the identified DRSLs.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

Classroom visits, individual faculty conferences, and meetings with the school administration provided the Visiting Team an extended opportunity to discuss the

standards of the Utah Core Curriculum and in the inclusion of the Utah Life Skills. The teachers interviewed could readily identify lessons in the Utah Core Curriculum and standards that were being addressed. The Utah Life Skills program is integral to the total school program, school mission, and identified DRSLs.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The DRSLs were posted throughout the building and in every classroom. The school exhibits a sense of family and collaboration. The faculty was not only aware of what was occurring in other departments, but actually seemed to care about what going on throughout the school. The faculty understood the DRSLs, their relationship to the mission and beliefs, and in the interaction of the DRSLs from department to department. It was apparent to the Visiting Team that the principal is a strong advocate of the DRSLs, and thus leads by example.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The teachers use a variety of methods for working with these alternative education students. The students are engaged as active, self-directed learners, and are given a vast array of learning experiences in which to engage, including creative problem solving, individual responsibility for their educational program, expository writing, oral presentations, individual project development.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The professional staff employs instructional strategies that support the school mission. Multiple instructional strategies were observed—strategies that recognized individual learning styles, required higher-level thinking processes, and actively engaged the students as active learners, and that helped the students to become self-directed learners.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The school offers programs at varied times to accommodate individual student need and schedules. Students serve internships, attend off-campus programs, and have the opportunity for individual programming. The school is very student centered, with a major emphasis on providing meaningful and individual options for students. It is apparent, in talking with students and parents, that these groups recognize the school's effort to provide opportunities to give students the opportunity for success.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The staff of Two Rivers High School places great importance on school assessment, since not much homework is required. Methods of assessment include (1) determining entry-level status and progress of all students in reading and mathematics to competency levels, (2) giving and assessing regular class assignments, (3) administering formal assessments such as quizzes and tests, (4) direct teacher observation of student performance, (5) large and small group discussions, (6) projects and presentations, (7) games, (8) open-ended questions, and (9) the exercise of higher-order thinking skills.

With Utah specific standards, the school uses standardized assessments to facilitate and improve instruction. These include the CRTs, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and UBSCT. The results of these tests are used to assist the staff in continually improving the instructional process.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The staff of Two Rivers High School uses varied assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies, and to assess student growth over time.

Strategies teachers use to assess gains in student competency and growth include regular class assignments, direct teacher observation, large and small group discussion, projects, presentations, games, open-ended questions, student self-assessment, portfolio notebooks, and formal assessments such as quizzes and tests. The school also uses the Monroe Reading Test as an initial assessment and periodically throughout a student's tenure to measure competency and growth in reading.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

The school's professional development program allows for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies that are developed with fairness and equality in mind. The Professional Learning Community meets weekly for study and collaboration, and the administration holds frequent in-

service sessions to (among other things) assist staff in developing assessment strategies that are positively structured for student growth. Students' disclosure statements detail course descriptions and proficiency criteria for each class.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?
 - Two Rivers has a Professional Learning Community (PLC) program. Teachers and administrators meet weekly to discuss student improvement and academic instruction. The principal produces a weekly newsletter for teachers called *Friday Focus*. In this newsletter the principal highlights good teaching practices around the school.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?
 - Each student who enters Two Rivers completes and academic assessment placement test. Based on these test results, as well as the student's credits, grades, and UBSCT scores, the student is placed in the proper academic classes. Teachers meet weekly in faculty meetings to discuss student progress and make adjustments to the academic program.
- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
 - Each student is assigned an advisory period, with a teacher serving as an academic advisor. The advisor evaluates the student's grades and credits every four weeks. Adjustments are then made according to the student's needs. The principal visits each teacher's classroom on a regular basis to ensure instructional quality and effectiveness.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?
 - Each teacher serves on a leadership committee (School Goals, Attendance, Safe Schools, Community Council, Graduation, Accreditation, Awards, Fundraising, or Social). Committee findings and goals are discussed in faculty meetings. All teachers then have input into decisions that affect the school community.
- e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the

DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The DRSLs have been incorporated into the total school program. Specific courses and programs have incorporated the DRSLs into their content. The administration has committed significant financial resources to meeting the DRSL goals. These DRSLs are also incorporated into the school culture. Students understand them and can explain how they are a part of the school program.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

Each teacher serves on a leadership committee. Progress of these committees and other topics are discussed each week in faculty meeting. Teachers are assigned turns to compile notes from faculty meeting and distribute them to the rest of the faculty. Teachers also meet several times a year to collaborate in a PLC. Several positive outcomes have resulted from these meetings. A school-wide curriculum map has been produced so that teachers know what other teachers are teaching during each week of the school year. This map helps with integration of assignments and cross-curricular school projects.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team applauds the efforts made by the school to reach and communicate with parents and legal guardians, especially the all-important student and parent/guardian orientations held eight times a year. The Visiting Team felt that even though the school must expend quite an effort to do this, the eight orientations are valuable to the overall school community.

Traditionally, alternative school parents/guardians are difficult to reach, and thus bonding into the school community becomes a challenge. Therefore, Two Rivers High School involves interested parents/guardians in many ways. Parents are invited to attend monthly Community Council meetings, assist in writing the Utah Trust Lands grant, and participate in other decision-making processes to establish programs and policies.

At least once a year, the school counselor meets with the parents/guardians and students to create and review the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP).

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

At Two Rivers High School, a high number of students work, often out of necessity, thus one of the school DRSLs is designed to help students develop and practice workplace skills through improving attendance, punctuality, and task completion. Faculty and staff members meet this goal by fostering productive business/community partnerships. Speakers from the community are utilized to support student learning in the classroom and, a school-wide Career and Interview day is successful because professionals from the community and business sectors interview and meet the students on a one-to-one basis. In addition, the school participates in the Ken Garff Auto Dealerships program "Keys to Success", an incentive program used to motivate and reward students.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The principal of Two Rivers High School continually is seeking ways to improve teacher instructional skills and knowledge. She, along with the faculty, believes strongly in the mission statement and desired results for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, DRSLs, and instructional practices. Teachers are in-serviced to study and understand the skills and curriculum they teach. They believe in "teaching more less," meaning that students should be given time and space to delve into fewer topics of interest and to learn more about these few topics rather than a little about many topics.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

It is evident to the Visiting Team that the faculty and staff, due to their caring for students and their professional training, are the major contributors to this school's success. The school has a welcoming, safe, and warm feeling; students feel they are cared for and thus can be successful.

The school continues to work on two key goals in an effort to increase the high academic expectations for the students and to promote learning and workplace skills:

- 1. Reading is a vital part of school and post-school success. The school will continue to enhance literacy skills to promote learning in all content areas.
- 2. Attendance and punctuality are a problem with many alternative high school students, although they are necessary skills for success in the school setting and the workplace. The school teaches and stresses to students that there is a high degree of correlation between attendance rates and high school graduation rates.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Two Rivers High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II - Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The new school plant of Two River High School provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs, and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school, rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the

licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Two Rivers High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. Teacher loads are smaller due to the alternative nature of the school. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Two Rivers High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place. The program of activities supports the classroom instruction due to the school's alternative education status.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

Each action plan has actions steps that are specific and easy to follow. These action plans and steps relate to the school-wide DRSLs. The administration and teachers will be able to validate the progress of each plan and make adjustments as needed.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

Each action plan has an "identified resources" section. In this section, several resources are listed that relate to the execution of the action plan. This list of resources is extensive for each action plan.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school wide action plan appear to be?

The action plans have specific steps, a time line, and identified resources. These elements will make the monitoring of the school-wide action plan measurable and easy to evaluate. There is a "person responsible" section in each action plan. It is recommended that a specific person be assigned to each action step, and not just a general department or group of stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The school's self-study is a quality document and tool. The Visiting Team appreciated the information provided, which was valid, reliable, and very useful to the team in preparing for the visit.
- The Visiting Team observed a sense of team cohesiveness and collaboration among all staff members, and recommends that the programs contributing to it be continued and strengthened.
- The Visiting Team observed that there is a quality focus on meeting student needs. The program is totally student-centered.
- The school is commended for providing a continuum of services to students besides the regular program. Students benefit from attending the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology Center (OWATC), the Directed Studies Program, P.M. School, and the Young Parents Program (when needed).
- The Visiting Team commends the school staff for conducting the successful and valuable student-parent/guardian orientation program eight times a school year.
- The Visiting Team commends the school administration and staff for making the student-teacher advisory program a valuable resource for student success.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for providing a quality and inviting library to students and staff. The librarian is well qualified and does a good job.

- The Visiting Team commends the board of education and the district leadership for supporting, in many ways, the alternative education program offered at Two Rivers High School.
- It was apparent to the Visiting Team that the school principal, Ms. Elaine Jensen, is a highly competent, caring school leader respected by students, parent/guardians, and staff alike.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school have an assistant principal, perhaps part-time initially, to support the principal and perform other important duties.
- The Visiting Team recommends that a student advisory council, or some similar program, be established to give students a collective voice to deal with pertinent student issues that need to be heard.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school's action plan list the names of people responsible for leading the progress of the plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school update the action plan to include the Utah Life Skills curriculum, in order to assist the faculty in "educating the whole child" by addressing social and civic responsibility skills, life skills, character, aesthetics, etc.